MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

STUDENT ID NO

MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

FINAL EXAMINATION

TRIMESTER 2, 2017/2018

PEN0045 – COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH

(All Sections)

15 MARCH 2018
9.00 a.m - 11.00 a.m
(2 Hours)

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENT

1. This question paper consists of **EIGHT** pages with **THREE** sections only.
2. Answer **ALL** questions.
3. Write **ALL** your answers in the answer booklet.

SECTION A: READING AND VOCABULARY [25 MARKS]

Instructions: Read the passage and answer the following questions.

Silicon Valley is Trying to Make Humans Immortal and Finding Some Success

1 Peter Thiel, the billionaire co-founder of PayPal, dreams of escaping death. Another billionaire, Dmitry Itskov, the 'godfather' of the Russian Internet, says his goal is to live **eternally**. Larry Ellison, the co-founder of Oracle, finds accepting mortality incomprehensible, and Sergey Brin, the co-founder of Google, hopes to cure death. Are these billionaires unreasonably ambitious? In fact, they are not trying to be ridiculous, considering that their quests are based on real science that could fundamentally change our understanding about life and death. It is hard to believe, though, since the human quest for immortality has been often unsuccessful and accompanied by tragic **debacles**. One example took place around 200 B.C., when the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, accidentally killed himself trying to live forever. He poisoned himself by eating death-preventing mercury pills.

2 However, failures in history have not **dissuaded** some of the biggest names in Silicon Valley from searching for eternal life. Thiel has given $3.5 million to the Methuselah Foundation for its main research initiative, Strategies for Engineered Negligible Senescence (SENS), which is devoted to finding drugs that cure age-related damage. Nevertheless, SENS, which has an annual operating budget of about $5 million, is **puny** compared with Google's Project Calico, a giant project led by Brin in his attempt to cure death, as he is planning to pump billions into the project to create a drug to extend exceptional life span.

3 There is also the Glenn Foundation which is enthusiastic about modern anti-ageing. Since 2007, the foundation has distributed annual Glenn Awards of $60,000 grants to independent researchers doing promising work on ageing. It also works closely with the Ellison Medical Foundation, a far younger institution founded in 1997. Their decision to fund independent research has started to pay off because relatively modest research projects funded by Ellison and Glenn are developed into a workable means to stop old age for laboratory mice.

4 In mankind's earlier search for anti-ageing solution, laboratory mice were also used. In 1956, Clive M. McCay, a professor of animal studies, performed a somewhat **callous** experiment on New York campus of Cornell University, as he sewed the bodies of living mice together in order to link their bloodstreams. McCay stitched one young mouse with an old mouse. With their bloodstreams linked, the old mouse seemed to age in reverse, getting healthier and younger.

5 In 2004, Amy Wagers, a professor from Harvard University, repeated McCay's cruel body-stitching experiments to see if she could reproduce his results, and it worked. Wagers discovered that injecting young blood from the young mouse into the old mouse seemed to restart those dormant stem cells, causing the old mouse to turn younger as the stem cells produced youthful and healthy tissues.

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Wagers also discovered that a protein called GDF11, responsible for keeping stem cells active and maintaining youth, is sufficient in the blood of young mice, but it is **scanty** in the blood system of old mice. In the bloodstream, GDF11 levels drop as they do with age. When this occurs, stem cells which are responsible for tissue renewal become inactive, injuries heal more slowly, and ageing begins to take hold.

6 According to Wagers, if ageing can be reversed, we might just keep on living as healthy and young humans right until some organ fails. This is in stark contrast to the immortality imagined by Gregg Easterbrook in his article "What Happens When We All Live to 100?". Easterbrook imagines a future in which life spans keep extending, but health spans do not. Consequently, the sickly elderly live for decades and use up all of the money in the economy. On the other hand, in Wagers' idea, living humans, including the elderly, would always stay healthy. However, *this* seems unlikely to happen, if continuous population growth is taken into account.

7 The current projections of population growth suggest that the world's population will rise from 7 billion today to about 9 billion in 2050; therefore, many concerns have already been raised about the lack of safe drinking water and the food necessary to live healthily. Those forecasts do not consider the possibility that we will stop dying. If we do stop dying, it will be impossible for the next generation of innovative health-tech entrepreneurs to redesign the planet to create a healthy environment for its massive human population.

8 Furthermore, in the future, we will not need to worry about death caused by organ failure. We will turn skin cells into stem cells and stem cells into organs, and there will soon be many cloned organs, either grown in the laboratory or 3-D printed. We will have a handy supply of spare cloned organs available in the emergency room, where doctors can cure organ failure that might otherwise be fatal.

9 Despite the possibility of an exceptionally long life span, do we really want it? Itskov, a hobbyist, says his desire for immortality is driven by frustration. He has taken up judo, weight lifting, diving and shooting. He says, "I realise that if I really want to achieve certain results in a hobby, I need to make this activity the focus of my entire life and sacrifice something else that is no less interesting." This dilemma keeps him constantly aware of how short life is. Hence, Itskov has begun his 2045 Initiative which has gathered experts in specialties ranging from robotics to artificial organ creation. Their goal is to create artificial bodies with human brain, avatars, by 2045. "When I am successful in realising this mega-project, I will finally have numerous years for numerous hobbies," he says. Meanwhile, for most billionaires, a short life does not seem as terrible as the calamity ageing promises: a slow decline and death that most of us accept as inevitable.

Adapted from Isaacson, B. (2015, March). *Silicon Valley is trying to make humans immortal and finding some success. Newsweek.* Retrieved from http://www.newsweek.com/2015/03/13/silicon-valley-trying-make-humans-immortal-and-finding-some-success-311402.html

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Part 1: Contextual Clues (5 marks)

Instructions: Based on the passage, provide a word or phrase that best expresses each of the following words.

Example:

Word	Meaning
eternally (line 3)	forever

a. debacles (line 9)

b. dissuaded (line 12)

c. puny (line 17)

d. callous (line 29)

e. scanty (line 40)

Part 2: True-False Statements (5 marks)

Instructions: For each statement, write (T) if the statement is true and (F) if the statement is false.

a. Peter Thiel's initiatives to search for eternal life include Strategies for Engineered Negligible Senescence (SENS) and Project Calico.

b. Wagers' experiment was the furtherance and continuation of an earlier experiment carried out by McCay.

c. By linking the bloodstream of a young mouse and that of an old mouse, both McCay and Wagers reached the same conclusion in their research on anti-ageing.

d. The fact that humans stop dying causes a population growth projection of about 9 billion in 2050.

e. Most billionaires are more afraid of a short life than the suffering caused by a slow ageing process.

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Part 3: Comprehension (15 marks)

Instructions: Read the passage above and answer all the following questions.

a. i. What is the common goal shared by Thiel, Itskov, Ellison and Brin? (1 mark)

ii. Why is their goal not considered ridiculous? (1 mark)

b. How does the Glenn Foundation contribute to the quest for immortality? (2 marks)

c. Based on Wager's discovery, how does the drop of GDF11 levels in the bloodstream affect the process of ageing? (2 marks)

d. Describe Easterbrook's idea of immortality. (2 marks)

e. i. What does "this" in line 49 refer to? (1 mark)

ii. State two reasons why "this" seems unlikely to happen. (2 marks)

f. State the main idea of paragraph 8. (1 mark)

g. i. What is the dilemma faced by Itskov, a hobbyist? (1 mark)

ii. Explain Itskov's plan to solve his dilemma. (2 marks)

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SECTION B: GRAMMAR [15 MARKS]

Part 1: Word Classes (5 marks)

Instructions: Based on the word and word class given in the brackets, provide a correct word in the word class stated for each question, as shown in the example below.

Example: In a study conducted **(0) recently (recent, adverb)**, the Pew Research Centre found that Americans are worried about automation technologies when it comes to tasks that rely on qualities unique to humans, such as empathy.

Are Humans Actually More "Human" than Robots?

In a study conducted **(0)** _____**(recent, adverb)**, the Pew Research Centre found that Americans are worried about automation technologies when it comes to tasks that rely on qualities unique to humans, such as empathy. They are concerned that, in lacking certain sensibilities, robots are (1) _____ (fundamental, adverb) limited in their ability to replace humans in those jobs.

This scepticism tends to steer people away from using those technologies. About 60 per cent of respondents said they would not ride in a driverless car or use a robot caregiver because there is no human touch or (2) _____ (interact, noun). About 76 per cent said they would not apply for a job that uses a computer programme to select applicants.

However, if being "human" means making wise decisions and having strong interpersonal skills, as survey respondents indicated, how "human" are humans? It turns out that the tendency to recognise human qualities might be mistaken, and humans themselves might actually (3) _____ (preferable, verb) robots in certain jobs that count on those qualities. If that is indeed the case, education and training programmes will have to take an honest look at how great humans actually are.

When it comes to thoughtful decision-making, human drivers do not seem all that "human". American fatal-crash data show that despite reductions in the number of deaths due to distracted or drowsy driving, those related to other reckless behaviours, including speeding and not wearing seatbelts, have continued to increase. In many cases, (4) _____ (fatal, noun) is caused by crashes which are attributed to poor decision-making.

In addition, humans are not necessarily better than robots at caregiving. In 2012, it was estimated that 4 million older Americans, or about 10 per cent of the country's elderly population, are victims of physical, (5) _____ (psychology, adjective), or other forms of abuse and neglect by their caregivers.

Adapted from Fadulu, L. (2017, November). *Are humans actually more 'human' than robots?* Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/11/are-humans-actually-more-human-than-robots/545714/

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Part 2: Error Analysis (5 marks)

Instructions: The following extract contains 5 errors of Subject-Verb Agreement. Identify the errors and correct them as shown in the example.

Example:

No.	Line	Error	Correction
0	1	die	dies

This Necklace Contains All of the World's Languages

1 It has been said that a language **die** every fourteen days, a loss that can wipe out an entire culture's collective wisdom. What would happen if you could help preserve those dying languages with something you wear around your neck? With nanotechnology and fashion, it is now possible to wear a piece of jewellery, which contain all of the world's languages.

2 The Rosetta Wearable Disc is a wearable archive of more than 1,000 languages compressed into a pendant less than an inch wide. It is the brainchild of the Rosetta Project, a language library initiative of the Long Now Foundation, a non-profit body that fosters long-term thinking. Embedded on the tiny disc within the necklace is over 1,000 microscopic pages printed on nickel using the latest nanotechnology. The preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 327 languages, along with basic vocabulary lists for 719 languages, form part of the content. The disc also includes a book about time that serves as the foundation's manifesto and a clock designed to run continuously for 10,000 years.

3 The concept of preserving all of the world's languages, as well as the cultures attached to them, are not new. It has been centuries since the Rosetta Stone, an ancient object that was inscribed with text, helped scholars decipher the languages of the ancient world. Since then, many have tried their hands at translating the same phrases into a variety of different languages to help preserve them.

4 Unfortunately, endangered languages are dying more quickly than ever before. For spoken languages, although a wearable disc cannot stop their disappearance that have picked up speed in recent years, it reminds us of the importance of committing ourselves to saving endangered languages.

Adapted from Blakemore, E. (2017, January). *This necklace contains all of the world's languages.* Retrieved from https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/necklace-contains-all-worlds-languages-180961876/

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Part 3: Verb Tenses (5 marks)

Instructions: Write the appropriate usage of tenses for the words in the brackets.

Example: Its stunning biodiversity **(0) <u>makes</u> (make)** it a unique paradise.

Stepping back in Time in Socotra

Socotra, with roughly 50 000 people, is an island located 380 kilometres off the coast of Yemen. Its stunning biodiversity **(0)** _____ **(make)** it a unique paradise. Once, Socotra was a fearsome place for sailors, as it was notorious for its dangerous shoals, ferocious storms and violent residents who (1) _____ (be) believed to control winds and turn ships towards shore for plunder and capture. Today, Socotra's rich biological diversity brings new explorers, who hope to learn its secrets before the modern world changes it forever.

As a Unesco World Heritage Site, Socotra is home to hundreds of endangered plants and animals. High on the jagged granite highlands, the dragon's blood trees are a majestic sight. Distinguished by a dense canopy that reaches towards the sky, the trees defy a hot and dry environment, living up to more than 300 years. On this island, goats are also a common part of the landscape. Brought to Socotra by sailors centuries ago, they (2) _____ (reproduce) rapidly on the island where other animal species were then still rare. Now, they are a staple of island life, providing both food and income for their owners. Unfortunately, they also (3) _____ (eat) virtually everything in their path, including the seedlings of rare plants.

For centuries, before the first airport was constructed and roads were paved in 1999, Socotra had been largely inaccessible, but since the commercial airport was built, outsiders have begun to discover Socotra, which is seen by some tourists as the most alien island on Earth. Over the last decade, tourists, who consist of both locals and outsiders, (4) _____ (explore) Socotra, and this is a boon to the economy. Aside from tourists, foreign companies have also become interested in Socotra. They gather frankincense, a plant known for its powerful medicinal qualities, and a variety of other natural wonders.

For now, Socotra's aura of natural beauty endures; however, as there is a future plan for a new, vastly expanded port which could eventually bring thousands more people to Socotra each year, the most drastic change (5) _____ (ensue). Hence, protecting the island for future generations while simultaneously accommodating modernisation will clearly be a great struggle. Once lost, neither Socotra's ecosystem nor its culture can be restored.

Adapted from Root, T. (2014, May). *Stepping back in time in Socotra*. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20130430-stepping-back-in-time-in-socotra

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SECTION C: WRITING [20 MARKS]

Instructions: Study the following visuals. Using only the information given, analyse the number of cars sold in Malaysia in 2016. In your answer, you are to link the information presented in the two visuals. You should write **150 to 200 words.**

Table 1: The Number of Cars Sold in Malaysia (September - December 2016)

Car Model	Units Sold			
	September	October	November	December
Lotus Premium	15,300	17,000	15,000	20,200
Titanium Hybrid	20,400	25,000	25,500	28,000
CXR8	22,000	20,000	18,000	16,800

Table 2: The Original Price and Discount of Cars (September - December 2016)

Car Model	Original Price (RM)	Discount (RM)			
		September	October	November	December
Lotus Premium	55,000	-	1,000	-	5,000
Titanium Hybrid	50,000	-	3,000	4,000	8,000
CXR8	52,000	3,000	1,500	1,000	-

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